SACRED DANCE GUILD
JOURNAL
SPRING 2012 VOLUME 54 NUMBER 1

Dancing the Sacred, Moving the World

Dance a World of Hope!

The sunflower, a flower that has come to symbolize "hope", will be your guide around the amazing Hope College campus as you explore and experience many forms and facets of sacred dance at Festival 2012! You will see our 3' version of the sunflower—made from recycled water bottles—all over the campus and this will be your indicator that sacred dance is happening at that place! And happen it will!

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible and achieves the impossible" (anonymous). THIS is what we also will experience at Festival 2012 as we open ourselves to explore all that this Festival will offer. The invisible will be made visible through the dance, the intangible will be felt throughout the week and, based on many, many comments, every person who has ever attended a Sacred Dance Guild festival has personally achieved something they had previously thought impossible!

Hope College is an ideal campus for a sacred dance festival! Beautiful, green outdoor spaces with wonderful dance studios and other event areas, a full service cafeteria that will cater to all diets AND it is right in the middle of the quaint town of Holland, Michigan with its many delightful shops and restaurants. You will LOVE both the spaces and the places around this venue! That is, IF you get a chance to leave the campus during Festival!

With the faculty and events that are on the schedule already that may be just one of the challenges you'll have to struggle with! That, and choosing between many of the workshops and classes that will be offered... Check out the details in the rest of this journal! We HOPE you will join us!!

"Dance a World of Hope"
A Sacred Dance Festival • July 24-29, 2012
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

A Letter from Your President by JoyBeth Lufty

As SDG goes spinning further into 2012 *"Dancing The Sacred, Moving The World"* educating, resourcing, and networking Sacred Dance in all its forms, it remains challenged by two factors that could bring closure, within two years, to this 54 year unique, needed more than ever, movement: **the need for more "movers and moneys."** We have to draw into our SDG global family, both the moneys and the people to do the work of all our programs and services we now offer…

Here's what we need YOU to do. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. **SPREAD THE WORD** about SDG through helping to promote and then **COME DANCE** the sacred with us at our Sacred Dance Festival 2012, Dance a World of Hope, July 24-29, at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. We need 150-200 to share this special time of transformation and hope! Both this Journal issue and our website has all the information (including a sendable PR video) you need to let the world know who we are and what we do, as well as about our up and coming inspiring and activating Sacred Dance Festival. Send out to your world our electronic and printed brochure, press release, advertisement.

2. **VOLUNTEER** to be on our Board of Directors or to take on some time limited projects such as helping to find resources, writing for our Journal and website, coordinating **SD-GO** programs, Local Networks, and Traveling Workshops. There are many tasks that need your energy and expertise. We cannot exist without an active Board of Directors, and especially without a President, yet we are still having such a difficult time filling these volunteer positions and getting all the work done. If you can't help to do the daily work of SDG, then help us to find donors and grants that can provide funding for our dynamic programs and the paid Executive Director position that we need in the best of ways.

3. After years of updating/modernizing SDG's systems and experimenting with the best ways to work with this unique volunteer-based global nonprofit, we have updated our BYLAWS and need everyone of YOU to **register your approval**. It's easy: just go to **HOT NEWS's—IT'S BYLAW AMENDMENT TIME—VOTE NOW!!!!**

It's up to us all, each and everyone, to put our time, energy and yes, money, where our hearts are in order to keep SDG dancing past 2012 and continuing to be a light of HOPE in the world today…

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It is about learning to dance in the rain." --anonymous

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Vice-President: Lisa Michaels (GA)
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The JOURNAL is the official publication of the Sacred Dance Guild, a non-profit international corporation, founded in 1958, and providing members with information and opportunities for *dancing the Sacred, moving the world.* Reprints of articles in the Journal are by permission of the President only. The Online Directory is intended only for the use of Guild members in carrying out the activities and purposes of the Guild.

Policy Statement: The Sacred Dance Guild recommends and encourages its members to list their SDG affiliation when presenting workshops and performances. However, the Guild letterhead, logo and name are to be used only in connection with official Guild business and activities, as endorsed by a Local Network or Guild Executive Board. Official address: Sacred Dance Guild, 550 Ritchie Highway, #271, Severna Park, MD 21146.

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Membership to the Sacred Dance Guild is available for the following rates: One-Year Membership (Domestic AND International, US Dollars) $50; One-Year Business Membership ($200); Two-Year Membership (Domestic AND International, US Dollars) $80; One-Year Student and Senior (65+) Membership $35; One-Year Group Membership $90 and Life Membership $1000.

Members receive:

- Online Sacred Dance Guild Journal published twice a year
- Online Membership Directory with geographical and leadership listings printed
- Calendar of Events online with regional, national, and international activities
- Membership in Local Networks with community events and activities
- Reduced fees at the International Festival held biennially in different locations within the United States
- Reduced fees at Guild workshops and those of reciprocal organizations
- Opportunity to be listed as a resource in the Online Resource Library
- Ability to sign up for email reminders for events listed on SDG Event Calendars
- And many more opportunities to "Dance the Sacred, Move the World" through our interactive website

Membership orders should go to:
Sacred Dance Guild, 550 Ritchie Highway, #271 Severna Park, MD 21146.

Deadlines for the **JOURNAL**: September 15 and March 15. Articles accepted with 500 words or less.

Local Network and membership news, letters and color photographs should be sent by deadline dates to: journal@sacreddanceguild.org

Historic Notes

by Toní Intravaia

From the Sacred Dance Guild Newsletter Fall 1975, Volume 19, Number 1

The Significance of Religion in the Dance by Wincie Ann Carruth

It is necessary to formulate a definition of religion. Havelock Ellis says that the quintessential core of religion is the act of finding our emotional relationship to the world conceived as a whole. The religious experience exists, according to Hoffdling, in the relation between reality and value in the effort to conserve value.

Religious feeling is almost always accompanied by certain muscular responses, the folding of the hands, the bowing of the head, closing of the eyes, and by all external signs of mental and emotional concentration. Dancing as a means of manifesting a religious emotion is a natural phenomenon, whatever may be the precise meaning or application to the particular occasion. These feelings or experiences burst forth in song and in dance, so that ever since the beginning of civilization, the dance has been a persistent form of expressing religious feeling.

Primitive man felt that he could bring pressure to bear on spiritual powers by use of suitable dances. So in every part of the world there are intermediaries who learn the will of the spirit through an ecstatic condition secured from wild dances. A savage does not preach his religion, he dances it. Dancing was the primitive expression of religion, and religion had no other expression than the movement of a dance. Out of these religious dances the arts of mankind have developed.

The Greeks, who worshipped gods of anthropomorphic form, used the dance as an expression of devotion to these gods, and as an expression of their profound philosophy of life. In all the stages of the development of religion the dance has been used to express the religious feelings of the people. It has offered to religion a medium through which to express this feeling. Religion, on the other hand, has influenced the form of the dance used in the worship of spirits, many gods, anthropomorphic gods, and a Supreme Being, offering them opportunity of expressing feeling through rhythmic movements."

From Sacred Dance Guild Newsletter Winter 1977, Volume 19, Number 2

Black Church and Sacred Dance by Sylvia B. Bryant

The plantation provided the setting for religious and rhythmic dance for slaves. Shout dances survived intact the transatlantic crossing and vividly recalled African dance steps. This consisted of one group rhythmizing a chant or spiritual and a group of worshippers shuffling counter-clockwise around the church house in single file, moving their hips in a rocking fashion, stamping and clapping. Black Sacred Dance, as a formal and acknowledged expression, does have a very distinct history.

Hampton Institute organized a creative dance group and dance spiritual for the first time in 1925. Since that time, Sacred Dance, using the Black expression, has been limited to theatre and concert halls. Many famous dance artists such as Joe Nash, Pearl Primmus, and Talley Beatty performed religious works. Arthur Mitchell and Alvin Ailey have choreographed significant dance works.

"The future of Sacred Dance is, indeed, bright in the Black church."

The Dancer in the Shrine by Amanda Benjamin Hall

I am a dancer: When I pray
I do not gather thoughts with clumsy thread
Into poor phrases. Birds all have a way
Of singing home the truth that they are birds.
And so my loving Litany is said
Without the aid of words.
I am a dancer.

And though it is not much, I know,
To fan the incense to and fro
With skirts as flighty as a wing.
It seems Our Lady understands
The method of my worshipping,
The hymns I'm lifting with my hands.
I am a dancer."

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For the future, SDG Members without computers may request a printed copy of the Journal to be mailed to them.

"Dance a World of Hope"

A Sacred Dance Festival

July 24-29, 2012
Hope College, Holland, MI

Awaken your spirit, nourish your soul, and celebrate your love of dance.

Festival Faculty Majors

Denise Damon Wade-Modern Dance for Body and Soul,
Kathryn Mihelick & Andrea Shearer – Liturgical Improv Dance,
Shahrzad Khorsandi -Persian Dance,
Dianne Eno - Environmental Dance
Jason Warley – Hope's Journey. Through Jazz

Concerts, Workshops, Performance Opportunities
Special Festival Events – Candlelit Labyrinth, Dancing in the Street - a Flash Mob Benefit for a local Women & Children's Shelter, Share What you Wear Fashion Show.

JOIN US at the 2012 Festival to experience the Sacred Dance Guild's Vision of "Dancing the Sacred – Moving the World"

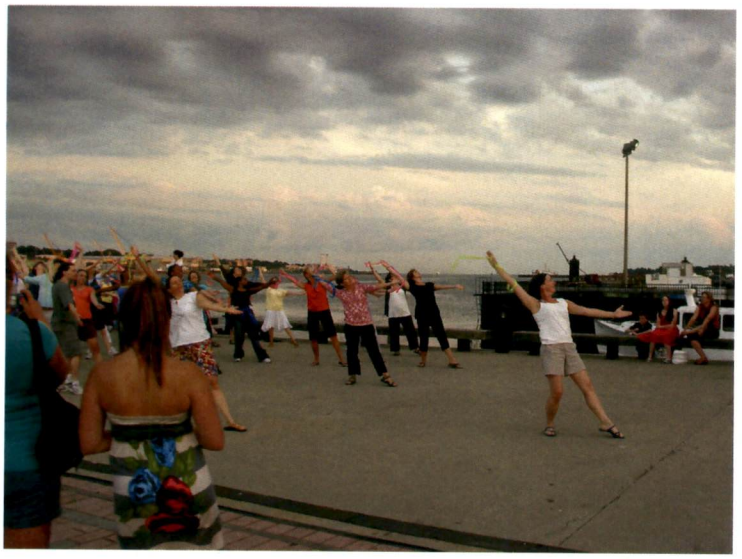
SACRED dance GUILD

For information and details visit our website
www.sacreddanceguild.org

Sacred Dance Gives the Sole

A Flash Mob Benefit for Women in Transition

Dance • Friendship • Doing Good for the Community
($15 Donation & a Pair of Women's or Children's shoes)



SDG's first benefit Flash Mob was held July 2010 on the pier, in New London, CT, partnering with the Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut. The SD-GO (Sacred Dance Global Outreach) initiative that supports Women and Children around the world, selects a local organization at each biennial Sacred Dance Guild festival. This summer we will collaborate with The Center for Women in Transition.

The Center for Women in Transition began as an initiative of the Grand Haven Jaycees Women. Their community assessment found a significant need to help women abused by their spouses and those "displaced" from their traditional homemaker roles. Since August 1977, the Center has helped women deal with significant life changes. The longevity and growth of the agency reflects not only the need for services but also the desire of the community to address those needs.

During the 1990,'s the Center added services and focused on children and multi-cultural services, legal advocacy and transitional housing. By 2002, the agency had completed a capital campaign, moved to the new program center at 411 Butternut in Holland, and doubled the capacity of the safe shelter. In the new location, programs were added to include the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program, Child Therapy, Girls on the Run/Girls on Track, and DELTA.

Women in Transition has been providing assistance and opening doors for women and children as they deal with the significant challenges resulting from domestic violence, sexual assault, and other life-changing situations. Community leaders, corporate leaders, businesses, supporters and volunteers from all walks of life have contributed to the growth, stability and success of Center for Women in Transition. June 5 of 2008, Charisse Mitchell became the seventh Executive Director of the agency to remain constant to the dedication to empower women as they face choices at transitional points in their lives.

Mission

The Center's mission is to respond to, reduce, and prevent domestic and sexual violence against women. This mission will be achieved through education, collaboration, and advocacy, with crisis

Vision & Values

A violence-free society where opportunity for women and girls is abundant.

We value the right of every individual to a safe and just environment. We value community accountability and recognition to eliminate the root causes of violence. We value the inherent equality and worth of all individuals. We value the strength and power of individuals to make their own life choices. We value the integrity of our organizational practices. We value responding to community need with vision, creativity and courageous leadership.

Do not miss this inspiring event, open to all, held on Thursday, July 26, 2012 at 7:00 PM, in downtown, Holland, MI. Workshops to learn the dance will be offered at Hope College on the day of the event.

Our Annual General Meeting 2012 • Friday, July 27 from 1:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Hope College in Holland Michigan • Sacred Dance Festival 2012 • "Dance a World of Hope"

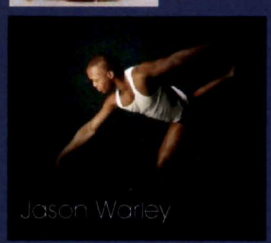
Kathryn Mihelick &
Andrea Shearer

You are invited to join with dancing bodies from all backgrounds, of all ages, and from many diverse experiences to celebrate "Dance as a Sacred Art" in its many forms and understandings.

Five days filled from early morning to the late evening—Opening Celebration, early morning Awakening classes, Morning Gatherings, In-depth classes, afternoon workshops, lectures, Flash Mob, Sharing times, concerts, Lumière Labyrinth, banquet celebrating Sacred Dance Global Outreach, late night video sharing... and so much more!

The options are many, the choices are yours!

Shahrzad
Khorsandi



FESTIVAL SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

Tuesday, July 24
Festival Registration: 1 pm - 6 pm
Opening Celebration: 7 pm - 10 pm

Wednesday, July 25
Classes : 6:30 am - 5:15 pm
Evening Festival Concert - featured
Workshop Faculty: 7:30 pm - 10 pm

Thursday, July 26
Classes: 6:30 am - 4 pm
Participant Dance Sharing: 4:15 - 5:15 pm
Flashmob! (Downtown Holland): 7 pm

Friday, July 27
Classes: 6:30 am - 4 pm
Participant Dance Sharing & Share What you Wear Fashion Show: 4:15 - 5:30 pm
SDG Banquet & Celebration of SDGO (Sacred Dance Global Outreach): 7 - 9:30 pm
Lumiere Labyrinth: 10 pm

Saturday, July 28
Classes: 6:30 am – 4 pm
"Dance a World of Hope" Faculty Concert: 8 - 10 pm

Sunday, July 29
Closing Celebration: 9:30 - 11:30 am

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early bird registration until May 25th
- SDG Members $400
- Non Members $450

Room & board - $350 (Single) • $265 (Double - per person

Contact Program Directors for information:

- Mary Kamp: Prog2@sacreddanceguild.org
- Wendy Morrell: Prog@sacreddanceguild.org
- Call our office at: 877-422-8678

Visit our Website for Details and to Register: WWW.SACREDDANCEGUILD.ORG
Click on Festival 2012 and you will find detailed information about all the early morning and afternoon workshops and travel information as well as scholarship applications.

Hope to see you there!

EARLY MORNING AWAKENINGS

Awaken to Hope

- **Yoga for the Lattice** *with Helena Froehlich*
- **Sunrise Barre** *with Linda Graham*
- **Breathing in Hope with Qi Gong and Tai Chi** *with Stella Matsuda*
- **Union through Yoga: Creating Hope by Creating Connection** *with Angela Nicolosi*

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

Exploring Hope

- **The Dancing Word: Bringing Life to Stories and Stories to Life** *with Betsey Beckman*
- **Paths of Radical Hope: Labyrinth Dances** *with Barrie Carter Gibby*
- **Eternal Spirit** *with Carla DeSola*
- **Dancing Connections, Building Hope** *with Marilyn Green*
- **African Dance** *with Cherie Hill*
- **All Our Relations: Native American Perspective of Creator Through Dance** *with Carolynn Hine-Johnson*
- **Dancing with Masks-Personal and Planetary Transformation** *with Sandra Hughes*
- **Hope in our Journey, Faith in our Path** *with Lisa Hunt*
- **Hope for a Dance Ministry** *with Mary Kasakova*
- **Dance to Deepen Your Inner Wisdom & Dance Your Way to a New Relationship with Money** *with Lisa Michaels*
- **Learn a Hopeful Dance** *with Marcia Miller*
- **Reiki Dance and Ceremony of Hope** *with Mary Joy Neuru*
- **Linking the Four Worlds of Jewish Renewal through Dance** *with Eve Pinsker*
- **Stillness Moving Ever Still** *with Susan Pudelek*
- **Flash Mob Dance: Dance a World of Hope and Joy!** *with Elaine Sisler*
- **Tallit: Prayer Shawl-Prayer, Performance, Community** *with Fanchon Shur*

Festival Resident Musician Emmalyn Moreno-Percussion, Piano, Voice

Dance a World of Hope

BODY PRAYER: PRAYING WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING

by JoyBeth Lufty

We Are The HOPE..."

Body Prayers often have themes or focused intentions, as well has having a common form of movement, rhythm and repetition all oriented towards connecting with The Divine. Circle Dances as Body Prayers, where everyone is connected and dancing in a circle, work well when the goal is to unite in a common intention such as world peace. Here we are focusing on HOPE because we will be working with this Body Prayer at our Sacred Dance Festival 2012, *"Dance a World of Hope,"* in Holland Michigan, July 24-29.

This is a simple community or group Body Prayer that can become as creative as the Sacred Dancers gathered. It seems to have evolved through our modern need for world peace. I have seen it written up in a songbook *"Circle of Song"* under the title of *"We Are The Peace In Everyone."* It is sung by all dancers as they also move. This means that the simple chant-like melody can naturally evolve into harmonies and the timing of "rounds." Different rhythms and styles can also spontaneously come forth and be organically developed.

Below is simply a guideline for the movement involved. It is designed to allow each group to spontaneously and naturally form their own movements as a group, their own dance of HOPE. I have witnessed everything from spirals to crawling on the ground, to birdlike flying movements to spinning and much more.

We are the peace in everyone.	We are the dance of the moon and sun.	We are the hope that will never hide.	We are the turning of the tide.
G G G Bb G G G	G G G Bb G G F G G	G G G Bb G G F G G	G G G G G F G G

This is Circle Dancing with hands connected moving in and out of the circle, arms lifting up and down in unison (until other movements begin to take over). The group can develop into people dancing in the center, snake line dancing or weaving or spiraling. This particular Body Prayer is an organic process just the way HOPE is...

JoyBeth is an author, dancer, teacher, and interfaith minister. She has been a faculty member at our Festivals, also serving SDG by being on its Board of Directors. www.soulintegrators.com

Persian Dance- in Perspective

The Non-Persian Perspective

"You're a Persian dancer? Oh- so you do belly dance?"

"What kind of dance do you do? Persian? Oh I know a bit of Persian dance! I took a belly dance class at the YMCA last year!"

"I love Persian dance! My daughter takes it over at the community center. It's called belly dance for teens!"

If I had a nickel for every time someone I talked to referred to Persian dance as "belly dance," I'd be traveling around the world in my own private jet. It's no wonder that we Persians get so excited when someone non-Persian speaks a word of Farsi, or even recognizes that Persians speak Farsi and not Arabic. I can't blame people, though, for not being familiar with Persian culture. For one thing, the American media seems to refer to ALL middle-eastern countries as "Arab countries", completely ignoring the fact that the inhabitants of countries like Iran and Afghanistan are of the Indo-European race, speak Farsi, not Arabic, and have music and dance styles that are different than those of the Arab countries. From this distant perspective it's easy to see that part of the map as the Arab world, which Hollywood often shows as an exotic picture of smokey hookah lounges and long-bearded sheikhs with their harems of beautiful bellydancers, and nothing else. The only other image of the middle-east, this time thanks to the news media, is the image of the "terrorist." I guess if I had to pick, I'd choose the former over the latter.

Belly dance, in Farsi is known as "Arabic dance", which is why every time someone mistakes my Persian dancing for belly dance, it's as if they are confusing my ethnic identity with another. In a way, it's like saying to a Chinese person, "You are from China? Oh I know how to say hello in Japanese! May be you can teach me some more words." I believe all cultures are full of beauty to explore and discover and I respect every culture. But I do wish people wouldn't constantly confuse my culture with others. It's a strange feeling of a lost identity. It's as if I have entered a room full of people who insist on calling me by someone else's name.

Of course there are always similarities in the cultures that are geographically close. There is an overlap in the music, dance, art; certainly a connection through the religion, Islam and "Islamic Art." There is always a cultural overlap with neighboring countries. But there are many differences that make each culture distinctly interesting, and it is those distinctions that give the culture its identity. So, part of my mission, as a Persian dancer/choreographer/teacher is to expose the non-Persian public to the aesthetics distinct to Persian dance. I do this by performing Persian dance in concerts and festivals, teaching Persian dance workshops at colleges/universities, schools, and libraries, and producing instructional Persian dance DVDs.

The response from the non-Persian community has been very encouraging. There seems to be a universal aesthetic quality to Persian dance, a certain combination of rhythm and flow that strikes a chord in people's collective artistic consciousness. In Persian paintings and calligraphy, one can often see circular and spiral shapes, one smoothly transforming into another. These curvilinear lines and spiral motions are evident in the dance style. Persian music can be meditative, with almost hypnotically smooth transitions, yet sprinkled with unexpected rhythmic and melodic changes to keep the listeners mind and heart alert and engaged. Persian dance embraces the same cultural aesthetics. The movement style has an underwater-like, fluid quality, yet embodies very distinct and intricate rhythms, and a strong connection to the pulse of the music that allows the movement and the music to become one. This sensation of oneness produces a spiritual experience that is sacred to both the dancer and the observer.

As in most "world dances", in Persian dance, the movements are very much connected to the music. It's incredibly important to mention here, however, that the connection between the music and the dance does NOT imply that the movements are merely an ornamental layer on top of the music. Persian dance is not by any means a decoration for music, nor is it a mere replica of the shapes and lines seen in paintings. Paintings exist in space, music exists in time, and dance exists in both space and time. Therefore, dance is a medium in which one can indulge in interplay with music and visual aesthetics, a trio tango if you will, in the realms of time and space.

This brings me to the second part of my mission in doing Persian dance.

The Persian Perspective

"How can you TEACH Persian dance? There is nothing to teach. If you are Persian and you dance, then you are doing Persian dance."

"Wow, you have a Master's degree? That's great! What subject? Oh dance? Well, that must have been easy! I think I'll go and get my Masters too. I'm a great dancer at parties"

"You dance for a living? How fun! I wish I could not work and just dance! Must be nice."

"I have great respect for the art of dance. After all, it's much more fun to watch people in colorful clothes moving to music than to just listen to music with nothing to look at."

"I think it's important for children to learn the art of dance. Of course as long as it does not interfere with their education or anything else that is important."

These are some of the many remarks I have heard over the years from the Persian community. Keep in mind that these remarks come from the more progressive, intellectual Persians in Northern California. We are not talking about the many Persians who consider dancing sinful, shameful, and immoral; or at best a waste of time. Persian dance, as an art form, seems to be non-existent in the mind of the average Persian. It is at best seen as a pleasant accompaniment to music, in other words, eye candy. Sometimes I think that I would almost rather be confronted by those who see dance as immoral and sinful than by those who trivialize the art of dance to the point of something which is only worth watching from the corner of one's eyes.

Historically, dancing has carried a negative social stigma in the Persian culture. Even before the Islamic Republic regime, who took over the country in 1979 and made it forbidden and ILLEGAL for women to dance, dancing had been considered a "low-class" hobby, and a "professional" dancer, who although might be hired and appreciated for her talents, would not receive much respect from the community. Perhaps this is the reason this particular art form—as opposed to others such as music, poetry, painting, etc.—has not had a fair chance to develop in Persian culture. While other art forms have lived through various stages (impressionism, expressionism, avant-guard, etc.), dance has remained vague, rudimentary, and forbidden.

So, the second part of my mission is to present Persian dance as an art form to the Persian community. It may seem impossible to erase years of pre-notions and misconceptions, but the truth is, when Persians see a dance that is high in artistic integrity, they do recognize it. When put against other more decorative and less potent dances of similar style, they immediately (and completely astonished I might add) see it as art. The issue here is not that the Persian community refuses to accept Persian dance as an art form, but that it doesn't expect Persian dance to be a sophisticated art from in the first place. The average Persian sees Persian dance as a social dance done at parties to popular Persian music and, in general, does not expect movement choreography to contain a message or build upon a concept. Traditionally Persian dance is not expected, by itself, to express a thought or feeling, or to raise a question, and it is certainly not expected to make a viewer emotionally uncomfortable, because it is supposed to be eternally pretty and happy, a visual ornamentation on upbeat music.

The response to my efforts in showing the artistic side of Persian dance from the Persian community, I am delighted to say, has been gratifying. Over the past years I have witnessed many Persians becoming enlightened to the sophistication of Persian dance and learn to truly appreciate the art form. It is the positive responses from both the Persian and the non-Persian communities that keep me going. In the process of trying to change people's perspective about Persian dance, we (my dance company) are also preserving the heritage, which is definitely appreciated by Persians and multiculturalists in general.

If I had a chance to make a request from the public, I would ask non-Persians to not automatically accept the images given by the media (including the news). Look at every culture from a fresh perspective. If you are curious about a culture, get to know some people from that culture, attend cultural events, see performances, learn about the art, eat the food, hear the language, read the poetry...and of my fellow Persians I would request that they raise their expectation of Persian dance. The next time you watch a Persian dance (or any dance for that matter), demand that it expresses something meaningful to you, and expect to be emotionally touched, intellectually fulfilled, or spiritually enlightened. Demand more of the art of dance, as you do of other arts.

Shahrzad Khorsandi, Major Festival 2012 Presenter
www.dancepersian.org

Toni' Intravaia's Warning and Passionate Plea

HEED THIS SDG MEMBERS...

The Sacred Dance Guild needs you now! The Sacred Dance Guild needs you on the Board! The Sacred Dance Guild needs your financial support!

Each one of us must realize that if we are to GO ON AS A SACRED DANCE GUILD, we need to HELP!

So What Do We Do?

We check ourselves first to see where we can help and then reach out to other members we know to do the same.

THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. The Sacred Dance Guild must go on!

Without your help, SDG may cease to exist in the near future!

Toni' Intravaia • Former Editor of the Sacred Dance Guild Journal
SDG member since 1958.

Karen's Dress

By Mary Kamp
Programs, Co-Director

The Silent Auction is a long standing, tradition for the SDG's Annual Meeting. An exciting array of jewelry, art, books, wine, clothing and much, much more is on display ready and waiting for your bid. I had my eye on only one piece of clothing, a beautiful Batik dress with dancing figures. Karen Josephson had worn this lovely dress at previous festivals. I had even inquired as to where she purchased it. Utah was what I thought she said, I could hardly believe my eyes. There it was, "my dress" on the Silent Auction table.

Of course, I placed a bid, assured that I would get it. However, I found that I was not the only one who had admired this dress over the years. Bidding became fast and furious. I even placed a higher bid. The bidding closed, I thought, surely someone had outbid me.

I was amazed the next day to find that I had won. Hurrah!

When I returned home, after festival, I thought of all those others who have the opportunity to enjoy wearing this dress too. So here's my proposal. At the 2012 Festival, I will put the dress in the Silent Auction and whoever wins, will take the dress, enjoy it for the two years and bring/send it back for the 2014 Festival Auction. Each festival, Karen's Dress will continue to bring $$$ to SDG and those monies will go into the general operating fund. Auction winners will become the "Sisterhood of Karen's Traveling Dress."

Whenever I wear the lovely Karen's Dress, someone usually stops to ask me where I found such a unique dress or if I dance. This affords me the chance to tell them about the Sacred Dance Guild and that yes, I dance, too.

Hope Sacred Dance Ministry

by Radhajyoti Deitenbeck

Hope Sacred Dance Ministry, in Holland, Michigan, exists to live out our desire to live and spread God's word through movement. Our students meet together once a week to prepare pieces, explore movement, study scripture, and fellowship together. We send groups of our dancers to local area churches and to the college's chapel numerous times throughout the year to help lead congregations in worship and spread sacred dance. Sacred Dance Ministry also plans three worship services throughout the year on Hope's campus, two of which are in collaboration with other worship groups such as Silent Praise and the Gospel Choir. Our ministry is open to all students, regardless of dance training, who are interested in exploring Sacred Dance. This gives us a wonderful diversity of movers who enable us to reach a variety of congregations and delve deeply into worshiping God through our movement.

Come dance with us at SDG's "Dance a World of Hope" Festival!

The Power of Sacred Dance

By Kathryn Mihelick, Major Festival 2012 Presenter

(The following is an excerpt from my chapter in the book, *Dancing on the Earth*)

The capacity for dances of the spirit to impact those who witness it was revealed in a recent experience of our Leaven Dance Company. It is one I shall never forget. The activity therapist of a men's prison in Ohio phoned to ask our company to be part of a program he was planning that would also include speakers who would focus on general health and HIV-Aids. Assuming he was looking for an element of entertainment for his program, I suspected he was not aware of the nature of our work. Indeed, when I asked, this suspicion was confirmed. I explained that we focused on sacred and liturgical dance, expecting him to reply,

"Oh, alright. Well thank you anyway. That's not exactly what I had in mind."

Instead, he responded with a quick, "Oh, that will be fine." Whoops! I wondered what I had gotten myself into.

It was with trepidation that I assembled a program of pieces, uncertain what might be most appropriate for an event about which I knew very little, and for an audience very foreign to us. We were advised not to bring any valuables—including purses or wallets—into the prison with us, but to lock them in our cars. Upon arrival, we were taken through a security check before entering the prison compound. Aware that we were bringing performance attire in our traveling bags, the security personnel asked if we would be wearing any fishnet hose. I assured them that our legs were covered with opaque dance tights and the dresses we were wearing came up to our necks and nearly down to our ankles. I was made aware of their concern in this regard when a story was relayed to me that one of the female rehabilitation speakers had been advised that "her skirt was too short," and she had been given one of the loose fitting cotton pant suits worn by the prison medical staff to replace her own outfit when she spoke to the inmates.

Our performance took place in a section of the main facility building, where inmates who were listed on the good behavior roster were allowed to come for special activities. We were to dress in a crafts room immediately across a hall from the main room. As we dressed, we could hear the guards filing the men into the room. The two guest speakers were already seated on the platform and were waiting to be introduced. Our section of the program was a forty minute presentation of dances which included: a movement interpretation of a psalm set to music; a trio, Touch of the Spirit, set to scripture readings interspersed with music; a dance depicting a poetic essay, and Helen Tamiris' historic suite of dances, *"Negro Spirituals."* These had been set on us by a representative of the Dance Notation Bureau in New York via a grant we received for an earlier project designed to celebrate Black History Month. They contain a nice blend of several songs, ranging from *"Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen"* to *"When the Saints Go Marching In."*

The door of our dressing room was located immediately across the hall from the entrance to the main room. When the program began with the introduction of the first speaker, I stepped out of our dressing room into the hall. The main door had been left slightly ajar and I realized I would be able to stand in the hall, unobtrusively peer through the doorway, and survey the faces of the inmates while the guest speakers gave their presentation. Yes, indeed, these were a bunch of tough-looking characters. (I immediately scolded myself for being so judgemental!) As the two speakers delivered their talks, I noted a few faces showing an expression of interest. But many stared blankly ahead, and some yawned and shifted listlessly in their seats.

The time for Leaven Dance Company's entrance arrived. The first piece was a solo by Andrea Shearer, our associate director. She stepped out to dance an interpretation of a song written by her cousin, Tom Kendzia, *"Let Your Face Shine Upon Us, Lord,"* with lyrics taken from Psalm 80. The music was gentle and flowing. Immediately all eyes were on her and a loud catcall and a whistle erupted from the audience. Guffaws and chatter could be heard, and a boisterous atmosphere gripped the room. My heart sank. I realized this was the kind of reception I had subconsciously feared. I waited with bated breath as she began, and noticed that very slowly the noise began to subside a bit.

As the program continued, whenever I wasn't dancing or changing garments, I used every opportunity I could to take note of the reactions of the inmates as they watched our company members perform. Those eyes, which had previously appeared vacant during the speakers' presentations and then had glistened lustfully with Andrea's entrance, gradually began to be attentive with curiosity. Slowly my misgivings began to subside. With each dance piece, the contour of the expressions revealed a revised understanding and perception of what they were seeing. A quiet attentiveness progressively increased as their concentration was captivated. They began to respond with respectful applause. As we brought the program to completion, the entire roomful of men rose to their feet in a standing ovation. Their applause seemed generated by a kind of reverent enthusiasm that I shall never forget. It brought tears to my eyes. Two of the inmates, accompanied by a guard, were permitted to talk with us before we left in order to tell us how much they had appreciated the program. These men had been touched and changed. So had I.

Our bodies, joined with mind and spirit, are gifts from God. The visual element of dance and the image it portrays in communication of the spirit validates its effectiveness in touching and transforming people. And sharing this gift of wholeness through the art of dance in a worship liturgy or sacred performance can have tremendous impact not only on the community with whom it is shared, but on the dancer as well. What more can be said.

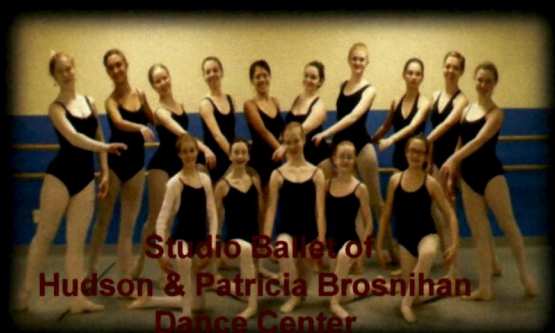
Praise Him with timbrel and dance! Ps.150:4

Kathryn Mihelick, "Liturgical Dance as an Avenue to God " in *DANCING ON THE EARTH*, ed. Johanna Leseho, Ph.D. & Sandra McMaster,M.Ed., (Scotland, UK: Findhorn Press, 2010), excerpt - 63,64.

Culture Fest Dancers 2012

A Multi-Cultural Dance Concert

A Benefit Concert for "Dancers " in Armenia & Croatia
Sponsored by
The Sacred Dance Guild & the North East Dance Retailers Association



Dancing the Sacred...Moving the World

Sunday March 25, 2012 ~ 2:30 PM
National Heritage Museum
33 Marrett Road
Lexington, MA 02421
Tickets: $10 Adults, $5 (12 years and under)
For more information contact Elaine Sisler ,PR2@sacreddanceguild.org

We did it again! Seven different dance groups from the Boston area gathered to perform in the SDG sponsored Culture Fest concert at the Museum of our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts on March 25, 2012.

It was a splendid and varied afternoon of multicultural dance presentations that included dancers of all ages. In addition, the Northeast Dance Retailers Association donated thousands of dollars worth of new dance supplies that will be shipped to dancers in need in Armenia and Croatia.

By Elaine Sisler

We definitely danced the sacred and moved our world toward peace. This was most evident as we all gathered on stage to sing and dance the hymn "Go Now in Peace". This touching finale ended with dancers smiling and embracing one another. The Culture Fest concert was a perfect demonstration of dancing in harmony so we can learn to live together in peace. The concert reviews are in and here are few for you to enjoy:

"I can't thank you enough for organizing and executing such a successful event! It was a privilege to dance with all the other groups and to see the audience enjoy a wide spectrum of artistry. - Garen: Sayat Nova Armenian Dance Company

"It was an honor to attend Culture Fest. Keep up the good work!" - Irena: Croatian School of Boston

"My family, friends and I enjoyed the Culture Fest. We really loved the Armenians! Thanks for your dedication." -Angela: Studio Ballet Parent

"Thank you for the superb job you have done to get us together and perform on the same stage. It is a precious experience. We enjoyed every minute of it. Through the excellent performances, every dancer's passion and dedication to his/her own culture glowed brilliantly on their faces. It is such a wonderful feeling witnessing all these happenings. We thank you sincerely for inviting us to participate in this event." -Liwen: Melody Chinese Dance Troupe

For more information on SD-GO and the Culture Fest Concert please go to the SDG website.

It is my sincere hope that sacred dancers in other cities and towns will create their own Culture Fests. It is well worth the time and energy because the blessings are abundant. A special "Thank You" to JoyBeth, our fearless leader, who was at my side helping and encouraging me every step of the blessed Culture Fest way!

TRANSFORMATION AND HOPE

by Linda Graham, Early Morning Festival 2012 Presenter

In spring 2010, I was awarded a grant to pursue research activities in the field of community dance from the Great Lakes College New Directions Initiative (Mellon Foundation). It was thus that I found myself assisting Marylee Hardenbergh (Global Site Performances) in the creation, organization and production of a flash mob for the Sacred Dance Guild's International Festival at Connecticut College in New London, CT in the summer of 2010.

As a long-term faculty member of Hope College in Holland, MI, I had heard of the Sacred Dance Guild because my former Chair and predecessor, Maxine DeBruyn, had served as an SDG President years before. But until I attended the conference, I did not really know anything about the organization. Marylee had been commissioned by the Sacred Dance Guild Board to create and direct-produce a "Flash Mob" event for the festival participants and whatever community members were interested in joining for that singular event. To this end, she promptly put me to work with a variety of tasks, but I found plenty of time to investigate the offerings of the festival.

I was immediately impressed with the genuine kindness of every festival attendee I met. The classes were fun and interesting. I learned a 2000 year-old Assyrian Women's mourning dance, the basics of the dervish spin (a movement that did not agree with me, as I spent the rest of the day rather green around the gills); it was a joy to take modern and yoga classes, to share the morning with others in concentric circles of gratitude. But what was most engaging for me was the truly inclusive interfaith character of this organization. In a time when divisiveness and political agenda is served by hyperbolic religious exclusivity, the honesty and humbling generosity of the Sacred Dance Guild Festival participants was refreshing, invigorating and reassuring. In a world emboldened by fear and ignorance, I'd found a place where all could embrace their chosen spiritual path without fear of judgment, and therefore all could share freely. As a Christian, I embrace a world-view open to the value of interfaith relationships and diversity. I truly believe that faith gives one the means to understand purpose, and the progress of humanity (and peace) can only come when the various faiths honor their commonalities, acknowledge their differences, and embrace their common purpose. "Soaring: Transformation and Transcendence" brought these beautiful beings to a place where they could explore their common purpose through the ultimate universal language: dance.

In Marylee's report to the SDG board, she said, "...[her] favorite part of the dance [flash mob] itself was the whole group coming together in the in-out waves and then bursting into unison." This moment was an appropriate metaphor for the Festival—all ships rise with the tide, and to be uplifted in this movement moment, together, was to be uplifted in far more ways than this alone.

MEMORIES FROM FESTIVAL 2010

LET'S MAKE NEW ONES TOGETHER

JULY 24-29!

RECOMMENDED READING/VIEWING

By Toni' Intravaia

Transformational Joy by Edward Webster published by DRA of Vermont. Transformational joy is relevant to worship and its effectiveness is in bringing about changes in lives.

The Crack Between the Worlds by Maggie Kast, published by Wipf and Stock Publishers, ISBN 978-1-60608-777-0. The writing is powerful with an intense spirituality and a detailed expression of the rhythms of life, in all joys and sorrows.
Cost: $25

The Dancing Word: Mary Magdalene by Betsey Beckman. Join one of North America's liturgical dancers for a journey through the landscape of deep grief into the exuberance of resurrection.
www.the dancingword.com (DVD)
Cost: $34.95

Dance As the Spirit Moves: A Practical Guide to Worship and Dance by Heather Clark. Publisher: Destiny Image. From healing dances, readers will discover the varieties of biblical dance and how it can be part of Divine life.
Cost: $11.99.

A Practical Guide to Dancing in Worship by Deana Bess Sherman. Deena Sherman, P.O. Box 119, North Aurora, Illinois 60542. This volume shows that liturgical dance is the practice of sacred dance with the context of liturgical worship.
Cost: ($12 per book and $3 shipping)

WANTED:

Pictures of you and/or your Dance Group/Troupe dancing the sacred.

Send who, what, when and where to Pres@sacreddanceguild.org.

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COLOR rates for our regular ads:

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1/4 page	1 issue $75	2 issues $125
1/2 page	1 issue $125	2 issues $200

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